

Secretary of State Terri Lynn Land
Inaugural Address
Monday, January 1, 2007

Good afternoon.

Governor Granholm, Lt. Governor Cherry, Attorney General Mike Cox, members of the court, and elected officials: I look forward to working together to make this a year of great progress for the people of Michigan.

May we remember the wisdom President Ford offered upon taking office:

...[T]here is no way we can go forward except together and no way anybody can win except by serving the people's urgent needs.¹

My fellow citizens, public service is a great honor. It is also a great opportunity to bring about positive change for many people. As you once again entrust me with this office, I reaffirm my vow to serve you to the best of my ability. I will make the most of this new opportunity, and your best interests will continue to guide me.

Four years ago, as I began my journey with the Department of State, I pledged to keep Michigan driving forward-and we have! I promised to make branch offices more flexible for our customers and to offer more services online-and we have delivered. With you in mind, we changed our business schedule to include Saturday hours and modernized our branch offices.

As technology marches on, we are harnessing its power and putting it to work for you.

A record number of customers are using our online services. By promoting our Web site on our signs, we have increased the number of Internet transactions. In fact, last year alone, we had more than a million of them. And those who do need to visit a branch office can renew their license plate tabs in minutes on our Self-Service Stations. Simply put: doing business with the Secretary of State's office is faster and more convenient than ever before!

As I began my first term, I promised to strengthen and unify Michigan's elections system-and we have. We secured federal funding, and maximized every dollar of it, enabling us to move Michigan into a new era of voting. There is now one voting system in our state-optical scan-and it has made our voting process more efficient and accurate.

We have also made our system more accessible to voters with disabilities. Last year, the department partnered with the disability community to put equipment in polling places that allows them to vote privately and independently. For the first time in their lives, many people with disabilities are finally able to vote on their own.

On my first day as Secretary, I promised to be accessible to you and responsive to your concerns. I have worked hard to do that. During my first term, I went to you for ideas. I visited every branch office, more than 150 of them, not once, but twice. By listening to customers and employees from all 83 counties, I gained valuable insight on how to improve our services.

I also worked with elected officials, nonprofits, businesses and residents from across the state to make our citizens safer and our communities stronger. As a result, our driver's education program is even better today than it was before. Training is tougher to ensure that our young drivers are safer behind the wheel.

Abandoned vehicles-which littered our streets and posed health and safety risks-are now removed faster through an improved process. In the first year alone, we cleared 100,000 junk cars from our streets.

With your help, we are also saving lives! We have doubled the names on the state's organ donor registry to one million. Last year, a record number of transplant patients were given a second chance at life and more time with their families.

These are goals I am proud to have helped our state achieve. Together, there is much more we can accomplish!

I remain committed to serving you well and making ours the most innovative, cutting-edge department in the nation. In the months and years ahead, we will continue expanding your options and conveniences. You can look forward to more PLUS offices and SUPER!Centers, to offer you enhanced services, more Self-Service Stations to save you time and more online services to let you skip the trip altogether.

We must continue to increase participation in our great American democracy, especially by young people. One way is to pre-register 16-year-olds to vote when they apply for a driver's license. Then, the moment they turn 18, they will be ready to vote. We need young people to be as eager to vote as they are to get their first driver's license.

Another innovation on the horizon is no-reason early voting. This would give voters one week before Election Day to cast their ballots in person. By providing more options, we encourage more voters to take part. By increasing participation in elections, we strengthen our democracy!

As voters, you have a right to key information before you go to the polls. We will seek campaign finance reform to provide full disclosure and greater accountability to our system.

This department is also focused on doing its part to protect our nation's security and our state's economy. We will continue to seek approval of a dual-purpose driver's license that can also serve as a passport. This innovative solution would meet tougher federal ID requirements and allow Michigan to continue our thriving trade and tourism with Canada. It is a common sense idea that could also help other states and we have the technology to implement it here. Given the chance, Michigan will lead the way.

As I begin a second term, I want to thank my husband Dan and children Jessica and Nic, for their love and patience. And to my family, friends and supporters: I draw strength and inspiration from you. I am especially grateful to you, the citizens of this great state, for your continued trust in me. I truly love this job and appreciate the opportunity to serve as Secretary again.

It is my strong belief that our government belongs to you. That is why, on my watch, this department's philosophy is that you are the customer. Our aim is to give you the best service possible and make doing business with us simple and easy. As customers and as citizens, you deserve results from your government. By working together, we will achieve them for you.

There are challenges ahead for Michigan, but I am confident our future is bright!

Thank you and God bless you all.

¹ Gerald R. Ford's Remarks on Taking the Oath of Office as President, August 9, 1974.